

Good morning, writers!  
Today is Wednesday, November 28.  
It is a Day 5A.

- Copy the homework in your agenda.
  - Finish Evidence Chart and list of Claims about your character (if you haven't)
- Today, you will need:
  - Workshop Notebook and a pencil
  - "Raymond's Run"

# The Literary Essay

Session 4

# Learning Target

I can...

...analyze character traits, looking for patterns, in order to craft a claim about the protagonist's most dominant character trait.

## Raymond's Run

by Toni Cade Bambara

I don't have much work to do around the house like some girls. My mother does that. And I don't have to earn my pocket money by hustling. George runs errands for the big boys and sells Christmas cards. And anything else that's got to get done, my father does. All I have to do in life is mind my brother Raymond, which is enough.

Sometimes I slip and say my little brother Raymond. But as any fool can see he's much bigger and he's older too. But a lot of people call him my little brother cause he needs looking after cause he's not quite right. And a lot of smart mouths got lots to say about that too, especially when George was minding him. But now, if anybody has anything to say to Raymond, anything to say about his big head, they have to come by me. And I don't play the dozens or believe in standing around with somebody in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather just knock you down and take my chances even if I am a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice, which is how I got the name Squeaky. And if things get too rough, I run. And as anybody can tell you, I'm the fastest thing on two feet.

There is no track meet that I don't win the first-place medal. I used to win the twenty-yard dash when I was a little kid in kindergarten. Nowadays, it's the fifty-yard dash. And tomorrow I'm subject to run the quarter-meter relay all by myself and come in first, second, and third. The big kids call me Mercury cause I'm the swiftest thing in the neighborhood. Everybody knows that—except two people who know better, my father and me. He can beat me to Amsterdam Avenue with me having a two-fire-hydrant headstart and him running with his hands in his pockets and whistling. But that's private information. Cause can you imagine some thirty-five-year-old man stuffing himself into PAL shorts to race little kids? So as far as everyone's concerned, I'm the fastest and that goes for Gretchen, too, who has put out the tale that she is going to win the first-place medal this year. Ridiculous. In the second place, she's got short legs. In the third place, she's got freckles. In the first place, no one can beat me and that's all there is to it.

I'm standing on the corner admiring the weather and about to take a stroll down Broadway so I can practice my breathing exercises, and I've got Raymond walking on the inside close to the buildings, cause he's subject to fits of fantasy and starts thinking he's a circus performer and that the curb is a tightrope strung high in the air. And sometimes after a rain he likes to step down off his tightrope right into the gutter and slosh around getting his shoes and cuffs wet. Then I get

Responsible  
Loving

protective  
conceited

determined

conceited

conceited

protective  
tough

protective  
(of self)  
competitive

hardworking  
protective  
(of brother)

## Squeaky's Character Traits

Character Trait	Page	Text Evidence (paraphrase or directly quote it)
responsible, caring	1	She babysits her brother, Raymond.
protective (of brother)	1	"...they have to come by me."
protective, tough	1	"I much rather just knock you down..."
protective (of self)	1	"...if things get too rough, I run."
conceited	1	"I'm the fastest thing on two feet."
conceited, determined, competitive	1	She brags about coming in first place for running.
conceited, determined, competitive	1	"...no one can beat me..."
hardworking, competitive	1	Spends time practicing her breathing to help her be a better runner
protective (of brother)	1	When walking on the sidewalk, she makes him stay closer to the buildings.
hardworking, serious, competitive	2	"...I'm serious about my running..."
hardworking, determined, competitive	2	She practices running all the time.
hardworking, competitive	2	"I stay up all night studying the words for the spelling bee."
rude, mean	2	"...Rosie, who is as fat as I am skinny..."
protective, tough	3	"I'm ready to fight..."
conceited	3	"I always win cause I'm the best..."
protective	3	"You got anything to say to my brother, you say it to me..."
competitive	3	"I continue with my breathing exercises..."
competitive, determined	4	"I run. That is what I am all about."
rude, mean	4	She makes fun of her teacher.
competitive	5	Her teacher suggests that she let someone else win, and she can't believe he would ever say that.
competitive	5	She begins the race by calming herself down.
competitive	6	"Squeaky you must win..."
proud, loving	6	She almost stops to watch her brother as he is running.
proud, loving	6	"...Raymond would make a fine runner."
loving, competitive	7	She decided that she wants to start coaching her brother to be a runner.
friendly, opens up, not as protective	7	She smiles at Gretchen and decided that she should see if Gretchen wants to help her coach Raymond.

# Connection



- ❖ What is a claim?
- ❖ What was our claim for our “Three Little Pigs” essay from session one?

**Claim: The Third Little Pig is an admirable character.**

# Teaching Point



- Today I want to teach you that when literary essayists write about a character, they work hard to come up with an idea, **a claim**, that captures the whole of that person, so the claim is big enough to think and write about for a while and *maybe* even become the central idea of the entire essay.

## Active Engagement

- ❖ *Open your Workshop Notebook to the next clean page.*
- ❖ *Title the page: Claims about Squeaky*
- ❖ *Let's review our notes on Squeaky. Do you notice any character traits that Squeaky demonstrates throughout the entire story?*
- ❖ *Try to come up with a claim that you think is big enough to encompass all of your most important ideas about Squeaky.*
- ❖ *Jot down your possible claims for Squeaky in your notebook.*

# Claims about Squeaky

❖ Do you notice any character traits that Squeaky demonstrates throughout the entire story?

## Squeaky's Character Traits

Character Trait	Page	Text Evidence (paraphrase or directly quote it)
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conceited, determined, competitive	1	She brags about coming in first place for running.
conceited, determined, competitive	1	"...no one can beat me..."
hardworking, competitive	1	Spends time practicing her breathing to help her be a better runner
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## Active Engagement

❖ Reread the claims about Squeaky that you have jotted, **star the one you think best captured her**, in all her complexity, and get ready to share.

# Claims about Squeaky

## Claims about Squeaky

- ❖ Squeaky is an extremely hardworking character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a very competitive character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a very protective character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a very fierce character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a very responsible character.
- ❖ Squeaky is an aggressive character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a determined character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a bold character.
- ❖ Squeaky is an independent character.
- ❖ Squeaky is a lonely character.
- ❖ Squeaky acts tough to people and pushes them away.

Claim:

Squeaky is a fiercely protective character.

# Review

What you have done is what essayists do:

1. Reread your entries and story.
2. Generate a list of claims (ideas about your character).
3. Cross out the ones that just talk about one side of a person.
4. Realize it's wise to try for one that feels bigger and that encompasses the whole person.
5. After finding one that generally works, you revised it and tested it again.

# Link

Today you'll work on this same process...

- Take a look at the notes you made about this story.
- Come up with a list of possible claims.
- *Test them out to see if they fit with the whole character and the whole story.*

**TIP:** Remember you are not searching for facts about the character but for *ideas*— for things that are not explicitly said in the story itself but ideas that you thought up on your own.

# Teaching:

- ❖ Some of you may have your claim and are ready to plan your essay, so let me get you started.
- ❖ Remember the Boxes-and-Bullets Structure from the first lesson.

**(A character) is (a trait) because**

- ❖ (one reason)
  - ❖ (another reason)
  - ❖ and above all, (a third reason)
- ❖ Use this structure to begin planning your essay.

Good morning, writers!  
Today is Thursday, November 29.  
It is a Day 6A.

- Copy the homework in your agenda.
  - Come with an idea for Free Write Friday!
- Today, you will need:
  - Workshop Notebook and a pencil
  - “Raymond’s Run”



# The Literary Essay

Session 4b

# Learning Target

I can...

...select a claim that captures the whole character.

...determine three supporting reasons that are my own interpretations of the text.

# Connection



What you have done is what essayists do:

1. Reread your entries and story.
2. Generate a list of claims (ideas about your character).
3. Cross out the ones that just talk about one side of a person.
4. Realize it's wise to try for one that feels bigger and that encompasses the whole person.
5. After finding one that generally works, you revised it and tested it again.

# Teaching:

- ❖ Some of you may have your claim and are ready to plan your essay, so let me get you started.
- ❖ Remember the Boxes-and-Bullets Structure from the first lesson.

**(A character) is a (trait) character because**

- (one reason)
- (another reason)
- and above all, (a third reason)

- ❖ Use this structure to begin planning your essay.

# Teaching:

The Third Little Pig is an admirable character because

- he works hard
- he is brave
- and above all, he outwits his enemy

# Teaching:

**Squeaky is a responsible character because**

- she keeps her brother safe
- she wants to do well in school
- and above all, she practices for her competitions

Teaching:

Squeaky is a hardworking character because

- 
- 
- and above all,

Teaching:

Squeaky is a very competitive character because

- 
- 
- and above all,



Teaching:

Squeaky is a fiercely protective character because

- 
- 
- and above all,

# Teaching:

**Squeaky is a fiercely protective character because**

- she watches out for her brother's safety
- she defends him
- and above all, she protects herself from being hurt by others

Link:

